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ABSTRACT

Project PROBE is a multi-site program located in two high schools. It is intended to increase career awareness among approximately 200 Hispanic students and 100 Chinese-speaking students through instruction in content areas, English as a second language (ESL), students' native language, and computer literacy, supplemented by enrichment resources and career guidance services. ESL/Americanization classes were also to be provided for students' parents. However, hiring problems resulted in only partial implementation of the project. A resource teacher and a paraprofessional were hired for one school in February, but a hiring freeze prevented staffing of the other site. Despite the problems, the administrations of both schools support the program and have allocated special rooms for the project's second year. At the one school where the project was implemented, project objectives were assessed in English language development, mathematics, science and social studies, and attendance. Student achievement data indicate that program objectives were met in English language development and attendance. Passing rates in content-area courses did not meet the program objective. Data were not available to assess Spanish language development. However, program students had very high passing rates in Spanish Language courses compared to citywide standards. (MCK)

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PROJECT PROBE

1984-85

OEA Evaluation Report

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O.E.A. Evaluation Section Report

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Grant Number: G00-820-2293

PROJECT PROBE

1984-85

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A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The Professions Oriented Bilingual Education (PROBE) project is a multi-site program is in its first year of funding from Title VII. It aimed to provide instructional, resource, and supportive assistance to two different populations of recent immigrants: 200 Spanish-speaking students at Louis D. Brandeis High School, and 100 Vietnamese-born, Chinese-speaking students at Sheepshead Bay High School.

The proposed Title VII staff included a coordinator located at the central office, a resource teacher and a paraprofessional at each school, and hourly staff for the parental involvement and the curriculum development components of the project.

During its first year, PROBE did not become fully operational. Project staff reported delays by the Board's Department of Personnel in officially announcing the available positions. Since the hiring process was conducted after the school year had started, releases had to be obtained before personnel could move to their new assignments at PROBE. A resource teacher and a paraprofessional were hired for Brandeis in February 1985. In the case of the resource teacher for Sheepshead Bay, the release never came. A paraprofessional was available in April for Sheepshead Bay, but by then the Board had frozen all paraprofessional hiring for the current school year. Thus, the program was not implemented at Sheepshead Bay, and only partly implemented at Brandeis.

PROBE students at Brandeis have the benefit of Spanish/English bilingual instruction through the already existing bilingual program at that school. At Sheepshead Bay, however, the PROBE resource teacher will be the first to provide Vietnamese-Chinese bilingual instruction.

Project objectives were assessed in English language development (Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test [CREST]); mathematics, science, and social studies (teacher-made examinations); and attendance (school and program records). Quantitative analysis of student achievement data indicates that:

-- Students achieved the program objective for English language achievement by mastering 1.8 CREST objectives per month in the fall and an average of 2.0 CREST objectives per month in the spring.

-- Passing rates in content-area courses did not attain the 75 percent passing rate set as an objective; hence the program objective was not met. This might have resulted from the use of a passing criterion much higher than that used citywide. The project needs to investigate the appropriateness of this measurement criterion and to use it accordingly.

-- Attendance rate of program students was significantly ($p.<.01$) nigher than the attendance rate of the school as a whole, thus meeting the objective.

-- Data were not provided to assess students' gains on the Prueba de Lectura. However, students attending Spanish language courses attained very high passing rates (91 percent in the fall, and 97 percent in spring) compared to citywide standards.

-- Data were not provided to assess non-instructional objectives.

The following recommendations are aimed at improving the overall effectiveness of the program:

-- Hiring the necessary additional personnel should be the first priority.

-- Holding orientation sessions with school personnel and staff to discuss the project's objectives and activities, and to plan details of the program's implementation for the year.

-- Providing possibilities for meetings and intervisitations among the PROBE resource teachers and other centrally-based programs to enable them to share information and resources.

-- Implementing the parental involvement component at both schools.

-- Conducting sessions for all staff on available software.

-- Including computer use in tutorial activities as often as possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production of this report, as of all Office of Educational Assessment Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit reports, is the result of a cooperative effort of regular staff and consultants. In addition to those whose names appear on the cover, Margaret Scorza has reviewed and corrected reports, coordinated the editing and production process, and contributed to the quality of the work in innumerable ways. She has been assisted by Eulalia Cabrera, who has interpreted findings, has integrated material into reports, and has written report summaries. Patricia Fitzpatrick has spent many hours creating, correcting, and maintaining data files. Finally, Joseph Rivera has worked intensively to produce, correct, duplicate, and disseminate reports. Without their able and faithful participation, the unit could not have handled such a large volume of work and still produced quality evaluation reports.

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PROJECT PROBE

Central Office Location:	1171 65th Street Brooklyn, New York 11219
Participating Schools:	Louis D. Brandeis High School 145 W. 84th Street New York, New York 10024 Sheepshead Bay High School 3000 Avenue X Brooklyn, New York 11235
Year of Operation:	1984-85, First Year of Funding
Target Languages:	Spanish and Chinese
Number of Participants:	300 students proposed, 86 students reported
Project Director:	Angelo Gatto

I. OVERVIEW

Project PROBE proposed to provide instructional, resource, and supportive services to 200 recent immigrants from Latin America at Louis D. Brandeis High School in Manhattan, and to 100 recent immigrants from Asia at Sheepshead Bay High School in Brooklyn.

The program is administered by a project director, who administers several other Title VII multi-site programs and supervises the project coordinator. Supervisory staff is located at a central office. Proposed on-site staff consisted of a resource specialist and a paraprofessional at each of the two participating schools, and hourly staff for the parental involvement and curriculum development components of the project.

During its first year of funding, the project was not implemented at Sheepshead Bay High School, primarily due to hiring difficulties. The English as a second language/foreign language department at this site has

been identifying potential participants, while the project office actively recruits Chinese-speaking personnel to start work at the beginning of the 1985-86 school year. According to the project director, 150 students were identified for possible program participation in the fall.

At Brandeis, the project resource teacher and paraprofessional were hired in February 1985. This report, therefore, is based on data from Brandeis High School, where a bilingual project to assist Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency was already in place. Project PROBE functions there as a supplement to this program.

II. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

According to the project director, 200 Spanish-speaking LEP students were identified at Louis D. Brandeis High School to participate in Project PROBE. Of the students for whom information was provided, nearly all were from the Dominican Republic (see Table 1).

All the PROBE students at Brandeis were recent immigrants and spoke Spanish at home. All had been in the program for one year, were reading below grade level, and were eligible for free lunch. The majority of the students were female (see Table 2). A high percentage of PROBE students were overage for their grade placement (60 percent). For the most part, this can be explained by the fact that the majority of the students came from countries where the educational systems do not parallel our own or educational opportunities were limited (see Table 3).

TABLE 1

Number and Percent of Program Students by
Language and Country of Birth

Language	Country of Birth	Number	Percent
Spanish	Dominican Republic	64	75
	Central and South America (Country unspecified)	17	20
	Puerto Rico	3	4
	Other Caribbean	1	1
	TOTAL	85	100

- All students reported are speakers of Spanish.
- The majority (75 percent) of program students were born in the Dominican Republic.
- The second largest group (20 percent) were born in Central and South America.

TABLE 2

Number and Percent of Program Students by Sex and Grade

Grade	Number Male Students	Percent of Grade	Number Female Students	Percent of Grade	Total Number	Percent of All Students
9	10	40	15	60	25	29
10	6	23	20	77	26	30
11	7	32	15	68	22	26
12	4	31	9	69	13	15
TOTAL	27	31[a]	59	69[a]	86	100

[a] Percent of program students.

- The majority (69 percent) of students served are female.

TABLE 3

Number of Project Students by Age and Grade

Age	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
14	2*	0	0	0	2
15	7*	0	0	0	7
16	3	7*	4*	0	14
17	11	10	6*	2*	29
18	0	3	5	6*	14
19	2	3	5	3	13
20	0	3	2	1	6
21	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	25	26	22	13	86
		Overage Program Students			
Number	16	19	12	5	52
Percent	64	73	55	38	60

*Indicates expected age range for grade.

- The majority of program students (60 percent) are overage for their grade.
- The highest percentage of overage students (73 percent) is in grade ten.

III. FINDINGS

The findings in this section are presented by objective according to the requirements of the evaluation design included in the Project PROBE proposal. They include the results of student performance on standardized and teacher-made tests, an examination of program materials and records, of on-site visits, and of interviews with relevant personnel.

OBJECTIVE 1 -- As a result of participating in the program, students will demonstrate an appropriate increase in English language proficiency.

Program students at Brandeis High School improve their English skills through a combination of English as a second language (E.S.L.), subject-area, and mainstream classes.

Brandeis offers four levels of E.S.L. instruction each semester. At Sheepshead Bay, the E.S.L. instruction for project participants will began next year.

The Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test (CREST)* was used to measure growth in students' knowledge of English syntax. The CREST was developed by the New York City Public Schools to measure mastery of the instructional objectives of the E.S.L. curricula. There are four test items per objective, and mastery of an objective is achieved when three of the items are answered correctly. The test has three levels: beginning (1), intermediate (2), and advanced (3). The maximum score on Levels 1 and 2 is 25, while the maximum score on Level 3 is 15.

*Extensive information on CREST objectives and psychometric properties are in the Technical Manual, New York City English as a Second Language Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test. Board of Education of the City of New York, Division of High Schools, 1978.

Mean differences between pretest nad posttest scores are computed to represent the gain score. The number of objectives mastered per month is computed by dividing the gain by the months of treatment.

The CREST was administered at the beginning and the end of the fall and spring semesters. Table 4 presents the test results for students who were pretested and posttested at the same test level during each semester. Complete data were available for 83 students in the fall and 62 students in the spring at Brandeis.

The program objective calls for an "appropriate" increase in English language proficiency. Because Chapter I programs consider an average of one CREST objective per month as an appropriate level of achievement, this criterion was used to measure the achievement of the program objective.

Examination of Table 4 reveals that the objective was met. Students mastered an average of 1.8 CREST objectives per month in the fall, and an average of 2 CREST objectives per month in the spring. Eighty-five percent of the students made gains. Students tested at Level 3 had lower performance rates than those tested at lower levels, partly because fewer skills are tested at that level and partly because mastery of objectives takes longer at that level. The program objective appears to be based on the assumption that progress across levels is linear; the lower achievement at level 3, which is found frequently in other bilingual high school programs, suggests that it is not.

TABLE 4

Results of the Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test at Brandeis High School

Test Level	Number of Students	PRETEST Mean	PRETEST S.D.	POSTTEST Mean	POSTTEST S.D.	MASTERY Mean	MASTERY S.D.	Mean Mastery Per Month
				FALL				
1	38	8.7	7.0	15.7	6.3	7.0	4.0	2.3
2	28	15.4	5.5	20.6	4.4	5.1	2.5	1.6
3	17	11.1	2.0	13.5	1.5	2.5	1.3	.9
TOTAL	83	11.5	6.5	16.9	5.7	5.4	3.6	1.8
				SPRING				
1	24	11.8	4.1	18.9	4.1	7.1	3.3	2.4
2	18	13.1	3.8	20.7	2.7	7.7	3.9	2.4
3	20	9.1	2.9	12.5	3.1	3.4	1.9	1.1
TOTAL	62	11.3	3.9	17.3	4.8	6.1	3.6	2.0

- Overall, students mastered an average of 1.8 and 2.0 CREST objectives per month in the fall and spring; thus the program objective was met.

OBJECTIVE 2 -- As a result of participating in the program, 80 percent of the students will demonstrate a significant increase in native language achievement.

The objective called for the Prueba de Lectura* as the instrument to measure gains in Spanish. The Prueba de Lectura is part of the Interamerican Series of Tests published by Guidance Testing Associates. The purpose of this series is to evaluate achievement in Spanish for Spanish-speaking students from the western hemisphere.

No data were provided to evaluate the proposed achievement objective in this area. However, the passing rates of students enrolled in Spanish language courses were reported to be 91 percent in the fall and 97 percent in the spring. This is a very high achievement rate in comparison to city-wide performance.

OBJECTIVE 3 -- Eighty percent of all target students will demonstrate an improvement in attitude toward their cultural heritage as indicated by results on an appropriate Cultural Heritage Scale.

No data were provided to evaluate the proposed objective in this area.

OBJECTIVE 4 -- As a result of participating in the program, 80 percent of the students will achieve a passing rate of 75 percent or better in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies, business, health, and careers.

Table 5 presents the number of students attending content-area courses and the percentage achieving 75 percent or better on final examinations. It also presents the number of students achieving the standard passing score of 65 percent. Examination of Table 5 reveals that the objective was not met. However, the high passing rates at the standard passing score of

*Information on psychometric properties may be found in Guidance Testing Associates Examiner's Manual, Prueba de Lectura, St. Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria, San Antonio, Texas 78284.

TABLE 5

Passing Rates In Content-Area Courses

COURSE	FALL			SPRING		
	Number of Students	Percent Passing at 75% or Better	Percent Passing at 65% or Better	Number of Students	Percent Passing at 75% or Better	Percent Passing at 65% or Better
MATH	84	63	83	79	51	81
SCIENCE	56	51	84	57	58	84
SOCIAL STUDIES	75	52	92	75	46	88
BUSINESS/VOC.	15	67	93	32	63	86

- The program objective of 80 percent of the students achieving a 75 percent grade was not met either semester.

65 percent indicate that the objective might be unrealistic.

OBJECTIVE 5 -- Students will demonstrate an improvement in attitude toward school.

Data were not provided to assess this objective.

OBJECTIVE 6 -- As a result of participation in the program, the attendance rate of program students will be greater than that of mainstream students.

Since the school's attendance rate includes the attendance of program students, the statistical significance of the difference between program attendance rates and school attendance rates was determined through the use of a z-test for the significance of a proportion*. This procedure tests whether the difference between two comparable proportions is greater than what can be expected by chance variation.

The attendance rate for program students was 94.98 percent, approximately 13.29 percentage points above the schoolwide attendance rate (81.69 percent). The z-test results ($z=3.18$) indicated that the difference in attendance rates is statistically significant ($p<.01$). Thus, the program objective was met.

OBJECTIVE 7 -- As a result of participation in the program, 85 percent of the staff will demonstrate an increase in awareness of pupil needs, problems, and professional goals.

Data were not available to assess this objective.

*Bruning, J.L. and Kintz, B.L.; Computational Handbook of Statistics; Scott, Foresman and Company, 1968

OBJECTIVE 8 -- As a result of the program, the parents in the program will demonstrate more parental involvement than parents of mainstream students, and will be more supportive of their children's career goals.

Project PROBE proposed to offer E.S.L./Americanization classes for students' parents. These classes were not available during this first year. Thus, the objective was not met.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The basic goal of Project PROBE is to increase career awareness among LEP students through a computer literacy program. It proposed to serve 200 Spanish-speaking students at Louis D. Brandeis High School in Manhattan, and 100 Vietnamese-born, Chinese-speaking students at Sheepshead Bay High School in Brooklyn.

Project PROBE was designed to achieve its goal through regular instruction in English as a second language (E.S.L.), native language arts, and content areas, supplemented by enrichment resources and services related to the professions. These include the provision of a resource/computer center in each school, additional guidance and career planning services for students, and E.S.L./Americanization classes for students' parents. Regular classroom instruction was to be provided through the existing school bilingual program, and the enrichment experiences were to be provided by PROBE.

The proposed Title VII staff included a part-time project director and a full-time coordinator located at the central office, a resource teacher and a paraprofessional at each school, and hourly staff for the parental involvement and the curriculum development aspects of the program.

Project PROBE did not become fully operational this year, primarily because of hiring difficulties. First, there were delays in officially announcing the available positions by the Board's Department of Personnel. Since the hiring process was conducted after the school year had started, releases had to be obtained before personnel could move to their new assignments at PROBE. A resource teacher and a paraprofessional were hired for Brandeis in February 1985. In the case of the resource teacher for

Sheepshead Bay, the release never came. A paraprofessional was finally available in April for Sheepshead Bay, but by then the Board had frozen all paraprofessional hiring for the school year. Thus, the program was not implemented at this site. The project is currently recruiting personnel to start work at Sheepshead Bay at the beginning of the 1985-86 school year.

At Louis D. Brandeis High School, the resource teacher worked with 200 students, the majority of whom were from the Dominican Republic. The project's activities consisted of lunch-time seminars. The project also sponsored a student trip to La Guardia Community College, and a meeting for parents to discuss college costs and entrance requirements.

At Sheepshead Bay, 150 potential project participants were identified by the school's E.S.L./foreign languages department. The PROBE staff expected to start in September will be part of the department and will work closely with the E.S.L. staff.

The computers were purchased and each school has planned the location of resource rooms. Students at Brandeis have the benefit of bilingual instruction through an existing program at the school, but the students at Sheepshead Bay will not receive bilingual content-area instruction. Classes for parents have not begun at either school.

In spite of these difficulties, the administrations at both schools support the program and have designated special rooms for the project next year. Each school has personnel for bilingual education or E.S.L. services, which the PROBE staff will be able to complement.

The following recommendations are aimed at improving the overall effectiveness of the program:

-- Hiring of the necessary additional personnel should be the first priority.

-- Holding orientation sessions with school personnel and staff to discuss the project's objectives and activities, and to plan details of the program's implementation for the year.

-- Providing possibilities for meetings and intervisitations among the PROBE resource teachers and other centrally-based programs to enable them to share information and resources.

-- Implementing the parental involvement component at both schools.

-- Conducting sessions for all staff on available software.

-- Including computer use in tutorial activities as often as possible.